



# **Family Partnership Volunteer Manual**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Family Partnership is part of Frederick County Government and will follow the Human Resources Rules and Regulations of Frederick County Government.

Family Partnership was established to assist families in their path to self-sufficiency.

## **MISSION**

Family Partnership, with community support, empowers individuals and families of diverse backgrounds to be stable and self-reliant by building on their strengths and skills.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. Relationships between staff and parents should reflect partnerships and will be characterized by honesty, respect, trust, and open communications.
2. The parent is the child's first and most important teacher.
3. Family and individual personal and cultural values and beliefs are accepted, valued, and protected.
4. Participants are treated as responsible individuals who are capable of reaching their goals.
5. Family Partnership recognizes that all individuals have strengths and ensures that participants are active partners in deciding on and acting upon a direction for their lives.
6. Participants are provided with information, services, and support that encourage informed decision-making.
7. Participants are active partners in decision making about policies, services, and activities.

## **Confidentiality**

Family Partnership's policy on confidentiality reflects our commitment to protecting the privacy of our customers and of our staff. This policy applies to all participant and staff information: written, verbal, and/ or computerized. Family Partnership employees, partner agency staff, temporary staff, participant volunteers and community volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality of participant information and to sign a confidentiality statement.

## **Diversity**

Family Partnership promotes equal opportunity for every individual and does not discriminate. Because of this, staff are expected to make sure all participants and co-workers are respected regardless of their race, religion, ethnic background, sex, disability, or political affiliations. Staff members are expected to encourage diversity, learn about cultural differences and refrain from jokes and comments that belittle any group or person.

## **Smoking**

FP is located in a County leased building and as such, tobacco use is not allowed in the FP building or on the grounds, with the exception of the posted smoking area. The FP staff, volunteers, participants, and visitors must adhere to this policy.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol at Family Partnership will not be permitted at any time. Violation of this policy will result in immediate suspension of that individual as determined by the Family Partnership Director.

### **Emergency Policies**

Family Partnership has procedures in place for various emergency situations. Your direct supervisor will review these policies with you.

### **Abuse and Neglect**

All Family Partnership staff and volunteers are mandated reporters. Volunteers are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of any minor, 18 years and under. Any suspicious physical markings or bruises, any allegation of physical or sexual abuse, or any evidence of medical or physical neglect warrants appropriate reporting. Center volunteers are to:

1. Report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the FP Director and/or direct supervisor immediately. If there is any concern or question of the possibility of abuse or neglect, it must be discussed with the Director or their supervisor.
2. Volunteers or staff will document any suspicion of abuse/neglect. This includes subsequent activities or procedures that are followed. This documentation will be placed in the case records.
3. If it is appropriate, the alleged perpetrator will be asked to meet with the team to discuss allegations.
4. A verbal abuse/neglect complaint will be made to the Frederick County Department of social Services, Child Protective Services within 24 hours. A written report will be submitted as follow-up to the verbal report.
5. No staff member or volunteer will attempt to investigate or treat any family member suspected of suffering from child abuse. The appropriate staff must make referrals to the appropriate agencies.

### **Discipline of Children**

Family Partnership will be a safe place for all participants. Under no circumstance will a person (child or adult) be permitted to hit, bite, scratch, and push or grab another person while on FP property. In no situations will any form of corporal punishment be acceptable or tolerated at FP.

Staff, volunteers and/or parents will not be permitted to physically punish the children. Other adult behaviors that will not be acceptable towards children include screaming in anger, neglect, emotional abuse, and criticism of a child or family, ridiculing, teasing, blaming, and insulting, threatening or using humiliating punishment. Violation of established guidelines may result in temporary suspension of FP programs and/or employment.

The goal of FP is to strengthen the family and help children develop self-control. We will not punish them for doing what comes naturally to them. Children will learn self-control when adults/parents treat them with respect and when they utilize the following disciplinary techniques:

### **Guidelines for Child Discipline**

1. Guide children by setting clear, consistent, and fair limits for group behavior.
2. Value mistakes as a learning opportunity.
3. Redirect children to a more acceptable behavior and activity.
4. Listen when children talk ... aid them in discussing their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guide children to resolve their conflicts and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.
6. **PATIENTLY AND REPEATEDLY** remind children of rules and their rationale as needed. Children are not allowed to hurt themselves or others, or destroy or throw property.

### **Professionalism**

All volunteers are expected to perform their duties in an ethical, professional manner. FP strives to be an individually and collectively family and youth friendly organization that fosters a culture that emphasizes respect for all individuals. Volunteers are expected to interact with fairness, caring, and citizenship and

### **For All Staff Persons, Volunteers and Interns**

#### **Adapted from the National Organization for Human Services**

Family Partnership is dedicated to providing services that are characterized by an appreciation of human beings in all of their diversity and to promote and encourage the unique values and characteristics. As a provider, Family Partnership will uphold the integrity and ethics of the human services profession, promote individual and community wellbeing, and encourage the professional growth of its staff, individually and collectively.

#### **To meet professional responsibilities, volunteers will:**

1. Respect the integrity and welfare of the participant at all times, treating every participant with respect, acceptance and dignity, regardless of personal values.
2. Protect the participant's right to privacy and confidentiality.
3. Protect the integrity, safety, and security of participant files.
4. Insure that the personal participant information is never in view of other participants or unauthorized individuals.
5. Refrain from sharing any personal contact information with participants.

### **Work Attire**

All volunteers are expected to present a suitably professional appearance reflective of their role within FP and planned activities on any given day. Volunteers shall use good judgment in determining the appropriate dress for the day's activities. All clothing, footwear and jewelry shall bin in food taste, clean, and in good repair. Volunteers who are interacting with children or driving our vans on a daily basis are permitted to wear casual attire including jeans and sneakers that are clean and neat. Volunteers who drive FP/County vehicles are not permitted to wear open toe or open heel footwear while driving.

## **Work Commitment**

### **Scheduled Volunteer Time**

Please remember that each staff member and program participant has a planned schedule and they are counting on you. If you are unable to come to Family partnership during your scheduled volunteer hours, please let your supervisor know as soon as possible.

Please schedule your vacation time with your supervisor with reasonable regard to current and anticipated projects. Please notify your supervisor of vacation plans at least two weeks in advance.

### **Recording Time**

Volunteer hours are tracked for all center program areas. Please sign in and out on the volunteer log found at the front desk.

Please be conscientious about recording your time. This allows us to provide recognition for your service and helps us to evaluate our volunteer program. In addition, your volunteer hours help us to leverage financial support for center programming. The ability to demonstrate the level of in-kind services and community commitment to the center can be a powerful fundraising tool.

### **Holidays**

The center's holidays follow the Frederick County guidelines and are posted in the staff mailroom.

### **Inclement Weather**

In all events of inclement weather that affect one's work hours, volunteers should notify their supervisor:

In the event that Frederick County Public Schools vary their schedule or close due to weather:

1. If schools closings are announced early in AM, FP services will be canceled. Volunteers should check with their supervisor to see if they are needed in the center.
2. If schools open one-hour late, FP services will be on time. Volunteers expected to arrive as scheduled.
3. If schools open two hours late, FP services will open one hour late. Volunteers are expected to arrive on time or notify their supervisor if they are unable to attend the center.
4. If schools close early, FP services will close at similar time. Volunteers should check with their supervisor regarding their schedule.

Please note, if Frederick County Government closes, Family Partnership offices will also be closed.

In all cases, volunteers should either arrive to work on time or call one's supervisor. During inclement weather, casual dress will be acceptable.

### **Job References**

After 50 hours of volunteer work at the center, your supervisor at Family Partnership would be happy to provide a job recommendation or reference for you, based on the quality of your work.

### **Discontinuation of Volunteer Service**

If you wish to leave your volunteer service for any reason, please contact your supervisor so that we might together evaluate your experience working with the center. Your comments and observations will help us in planning. We would also like the opportunity to express our appreciation for your work.

Note: As a volunteer, you may choose to terminate your services for any reason. Family Partnership does reserve the same right, for the rare occasion when a volunteer does not uphold performance standards or maintain an adequate record of attendance.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

- No participant information may be shared unless a consent for release of information form is signed by the participant. Even though a release may have been signed by a participant allowing staff to give information to other agencies providing service to our participants, discretion should be used, and only pertinent information shall be exchanged.
- It is each employee's responsibility to become thoroughly familiar with the FP's release of information form. Release of information forms must be reviewed as needed with participants.
- No discussion of a participant's personal situation or circumstances shall be discussed unless the discussion serves the purpose of facilitating or enhancing service delivery to that participant.
- When discussing a participant's personal situation, staff members must be behind closed doors so as to prevent unauthorized individuals from hearing personal information.
- Non-essential personal information shall not be shared, unless withholding that information would violate the law or ethical standards. (In general, these situations include homicide, suicide, child abuse, or child neglect).
- Participants attending programs related to job seeking need to sign a release of information form if staff is to provide information to employers.
- FP staff shall file their own confidential participant records so that other staff will not handle that information.
- Participant records, such as teaming notes, intakes, updates, progress notes, family action plans, etc., shall be stored appropriately. They should not be left where the public can view them.
- Discretion and sensitivity should be used to protect participants and staff privacy.

## **CERTIFICATION/CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

I have read, understood, and will comply with Family Partnership's policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

I will further comply with the policy relating to participant and staff confidentiality. If I am unsure or unclear about a specific situation, I will obtain permission from the Family Partnership Director and/or my immediate supervisor before releasing information.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **LIABILITY RELEASE FORM**

(ALL VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS)

In consideration for \_\_\_\_\_, being accepted by Family Partnership (FP) for participation in our volunteer program.

I (we) hereby release, forever discharge and agree to hold harmless FP, its directors, employees, participants and agents from all claims or liabilities of any kind relating to this volunteer position and duties arising out of this volunteer position even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver.

Furthermore, I hereby assume all risk of personal injury, sickness, death, damage and expense as a result of this position.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Applicant